



National University of Science and Technology

**Faculty of Commerce
Graduate School of Business**

**Promoting Women's Participation in High Value
Entrepreneurship in Bulawayo**

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ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurship has been growing in leaps and bounds since its inception in the 1970's. However, casual observation for Zimbabwe, has shown that women entrepreneurs are dominant in the Micro, Small and Medium scale Enterprises (MSMEs) sector at over 90% representation and they have tended to be overcrowded in retail, poultry, boutiques and cross border trade. It has also been noted that their approach has been survivalist, driven more by necessity rather than opportunity. While much progress has been recorded in the MSME sector, little has been known of women that are undertaking high value enterprises which are more rewarding. The question then is, why are women entrepreneurs not investing in this sector? The aim of this study, therefore, is to establish the reasons and find ways of promoting the participation of women entrepreneurs in high value enterprises. This is necessary, as women, at 52% of a nation's population, have been found to represent a vast untapped source of innovation, job creation and economic growth. Additionally, they possess the enthusiasm for business and it is now time for them to look beyond domestic roles and markets to make a significant impact in their individual lives as well as the economy at large. An investigation of previous studies on the matter, revealed very little to answer the research question, making it necessary to carry out a field survey and some document search. The survey was carried out in Bulawayo using a sample of 140 women entrepreneurs at all levels of business and the rate of response was 71%, which was acceptable considering the limitations encountered. Data analysis was done using SPSS and tests on hypotheses made included cross tabulations (chi-square), multiple correlations and multiple regression analysis. The results of the research confirm that 95% of women entrepreneurs are in the MSME sector and only 5% are in high value enterprises showing that this sector is rather neglected. The respondents indicated that their interest in the sector was stifled by such challenges as collateral and cost of funding; market access, knowledge and competition; lack of managerial experience and inadequacy of space to operate from, which is further corroborated by literature, where funding and markets were dominant. Key success factors proffered were, access to cheap and adequate funding, extensive marketing initiatives, cheap and adequate space to operate from and adequate training in business fundamentals. A business model was crafted (**Figure 4.7, Chapter 4**), and if adopted and implemented, it should be easier to steer women entrepreneurs toward high value entrepreneurship, resulting in significant returns for both individuals and the national economy. Further research in women entrepreneurship is required, that will enable the creation of a national profile and database for women entrepreneurs at all levels of business in Zimbabwe.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, woman entrepreneur, high value entrepreneurship, high growth enterprises